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Amendment to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

Claim 1 (currently amended) A garment assembly, comprising:
a belt adapted to be attached approximately around a waist area of a wearer, said belt consisting of a first side member, a second side member and a center member, said center member having an elastic portion for automatic expansion or contraction of a diameter size for said belt based on movements of the wearer wearing said belt or a location of the wearer wearing said belt in a body of water, wherein when worn by the user said first side member is releasably secured to said second side member;

a garment adapted to be worn by a the wearer, excluding trousers; and

first means for removably securing said belt to said garment at a back portion of said belt with respect to said wearer; and

second means for removably securing said belt to said garment at a front portion of said belt with respect to said wearer.

Claim 2 (canceled)

Claim 3 (previously presented) The garment assembly of claim 1 wherein said elastic member automatically maintaining a tight attachment of said belt around the waist area when the belt is worn by the wearer.

Claim 4 (original) The garment assembly of claim 1 wherein said garment is a buoyancy compensator.

Claim 5 (original) The garment assembly of claim 1 wherein said garment is a backpack

Claim 6 (original) The garment assembly of claim 1 wherein said garment is an inflatable personal flotation device.

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Claim 7 (currently amended) A waist adjustment component for a belt, said belt having a center portion, said component comprising:

a loop member defining a passageway, said loop member attached to a center portion of a belt, said center portion including an elastic member for automatic adjustment of a belt diameter size based on movements of a wearer of the belt;

a body member having a first side and a second side and a first end and a second end;

means for retaining said body member in a folded position, said means for retaining disposed on a first side of said first body member;

wherein the first end of said body member is inserted through the passageway defined by said loop member and folded over said loop member; wherein said body member is maintained in it's folded over position by said means for retaining.

Claim 8 (previously presented) The waist adjustment component of claim 7 wherein said means for retaining is a hook and loop fastening member disposed on said first side of said body member.

Claim 9 (currently amended) ~~The garment assembly of claim 1 further comprising~~ A garment assembly, comprising:

a belt adapted to be attached approximately around a waist area of a wearer, said belt consisting of a first side member, a second side member and a center member, said center member having an elastic portion for automatic expansion or contraction of a diameter size for said belt based on movements of the wearer wearing said belt or a location of the wearer wearing said belt in a body of water, wherein when worn by the user said first side member is releasably secured to said second side member;

a garment adapted to be worn by a the wearer, excluding trousers;

means for removably securing said belt to said garment; and

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a first loop member attached to a first side of the center member to define a first passageway therebetween; wherein said first side member having a first means for retaining said first side member in a folded position, said first means for retaining disposed on a first side of said first side member;

wherein a first end of said first side member is inserted through the first passageway, folded over said first loop member and retained in its folded over position by said first means for retaining.

Claim 10 (previously presented) The garment assembly of claim 9 further comprising a second loop member attached to a first side of the center member to define a second passageway therebetween; wherein said second side member having a second means for retaining said second side member in a folded position, said second means for retaining disposed on a first side of said second side member;

wherein a first end of said second side member is inserted through the second passageway, folded over said second loop member and retained in its folded over position by said second means for retaining.

Claim 11 (currently amended) The garment assembly of claim 1 wherein said first means for removably securing including a first connector portion attached to the center member and a mating second connector portion attached to said garment.

Claim 12 (currently amended) The garment assembly of claim 11 wherein said first connector portion and said mating second connector portion ~~consist of~~ form a zipper assembly.

Claim 13 (currently amended) The garment assembly of claim 11 wherein said first connector portion and said mating second connector portion are chosen from a group consisting of a zipper assembly, a buckle assembly, a side release buckle assembly, flip post and grommet assembly, hook and loop fastener, Zeus fasteners,

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quick turn screw assembly, and push-on post lock assembly.

Claim 14 (currently amended) ~~The garment assembly of claim 1~~ A garment assembly, comprising:

a belt adapted to be attached approximately around a waist area of a wearer, said belt consisting of a first side member, a second side member and a center member, said center member having an elastic portion for automatic expansion or contraction of a diameter size for said belt based on movements of the wearer wearing said belt or a location of the wearer wearing said belt in a body of water, wherein when worn by the user said first side member is releasably secured to said second side member;

a garment adapted to be worn by a the wearer, excluding trousers; and

means for removably securing said belt to said garment;

wherein said garment including a first garment strap member and a second garment strap member; wherein said garment assembly including means for releasably attaching said first garment strap member and said second garment strap member to said belt.

Claim 15 (previously presented) The garment assembly of claim 14 wherein said first side member having a first belt strap and said second side member having a second belt strap; wherein said means for releasably attaching includes a first buckle assembly and a second buckle assembly; said first buckle assembly including a first portion attached to said first garment strap member and a mating second portion attached to said first belt strap; said second buckle assembly including a first portion attached to said second garment strap member and a mating second portion attached to said second belt strap.

Claim 16 (previously presented) The garment assembly of claim 15 wherein said first belt strap is movably secured to said first side member and said second belt strap is movably secured to said

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second side member.

Claim 17 (currently amended) ~~The garment assembly of claim 1~~ A garment assembly, comprising:

a belt adapted to be attached approximately around a waist area of a wearer, said belt consisting of a first side member, a second side member and a center member, said center member having an elastic portion for automatic expansion or contraction of a diameter size for said belt based on movements of the wearer wearing said belt or a location of the wearer wearing said belt in a body of water, wherein when worn by the user said first side member is releasably secured to said second side member;

a garment adapted to be worn by a the wearer, excluding trousers; and

means for removably securing said belt to said garment;

wherein said first side member is adjustably and releasably secured to said center member and said second side member is adjustably and releasably secured to said center member.

Claim 18 (currently amended) ~~The garment assembly of claim 11 further comprising~~ A garment assembly, comprising:

a belt adapted to be attached approximately around a waist area of a wearer, said belt consisting of a first side member, a second side member and a center member, said center member having an elastic portion for automatic expansion or contraction of a diameter size for said belt based on movements of the wearer wearing said belt or a location of the wearer wearing said belt in a body of water, wherein when worn by the user said first side member is releasably secured to said second side member;

a garment adapted to be worn by a the wearer, excluding trousers;

means for removably securing said belt to said garment; and

a cover member removably secured to the center member prior

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to securement of said belt to said garment;

wherein said means for removably securing including a first connector portion attached to the center member and a mating second connector portion attached to said garment.

Claim 19 (previously presented) A garment assembly, comprising:
a belt adapted to be attached approximately around a waist area of a wearer, said belt consisting of a first side member, a second side member and a center member, said center member having an elastic portion for automatic expansion or contraction of a diameter size for said belt based on movements of the wearer wearing said belt or a location of the wearer wearing said belt in a body of water, wherein when worn by the user said first side member is releasably secured to said second side member;

a first loop member attached to a first side of the center member to define a first passageway therebetween, said first side member having a first means for retaining said first side member in a folded position, said first means for retaining disposed on a first side of said first side member;

wherein a first end of said first side member is inserted through the first passageway, folded over said first loop member and retained in its folded over position by said first means for retaining;

a second loop member attached to a first side of the center member to define a second passageway therebetween, said second side member having a second means for retaining said second side member in a folded position, said second means for retaining disposed on a first side of said second side member;

wherein a first end of said second side member is inserted through the second passageway, folded over said second loop member and retained in its folded over position by said second means for retaining.

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a garment adapted to be worn by a the wearer; and
means for removably securing said belt to said garment.

Claim 20 (currently amended) The garment assembly of claim 19 wherein said means for removably securing including a first connector portion attached to the center member and a mating second connector portion attached to said garment.

Claim 21 (currently amended) The garment assembly of claim 20 wherein said first connector portion and said mating second connector portion form a ~~consist of~~ zipper assembly.

Claim 22 (new) A garment assembly, comprising:

a belt adapted to be attached approximately around a waist area of a wearer, said belt consisting of a first side member, a second side member and a center member, said first side member secured to said center member in use and releasable from its securement to said center member when not in use, said center member having an elastic portion for automatic expansion or contraction of a diameter size for said belt based on movements of the wearer wearing said belt or a location of the wearer wearing said belt in a body of water, wherein when worn by the user said first side member is releasably secured to said second side member;

a garment adapted to be worn by a the wearer, excluding trousers; and

means for removably securing said belt to said garment.

Claim 23 (new) The garment assembly of claim 22 wherein said second side member secured to said center member in use and releasable from its securement to said center member when not in use.

Claim 24 (new) The garment assembly of claim 22 further including at least one releasable weight assembly attached to a non expandable portion of said belt.

Claim 25 (new) The garment assembly of claim 24 wherein said at

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least one releasable weight assembly is a first releasable weight assembly attached to said first side member and a second releasable weight assembly attached to said second side member.

Claim 26 (new) A garment assembly, comprising:

a belt adapted to be attached approximately around a waist area of a wearer, said belt consisting of a first side member, a second side member and a center member, said center member having an elastic portion for automatic expansion or contraction of a diameter size for said belt based on movements of the wearer wearing said belt or a location of the wearer wearing said belt in a body of water, wherein when worn by the user said first side member is releasably secured to said second side member;

at least one releasable weight assembly attached to said belt;

a garment adapted to be worn by a the wearer, excluding trousers; and

means for removably securing said belt to said garment.

Claim 27 (new) The garment assembly of claim 26 wherein said at least one releasable weight assembly is attached to a non expandable portion of said belt.

Claim 28 (new) The garment assembly of claim 27 wherein said at least one releasable weight assembly is a first releasable weight assembly attached to said first side member and a second releasable weight assembly attached to said second side member.

Claim 29 (new) The garment assembly of claim 26 wherein both said first side member and said second side member are secured to said center member in use and releasable from their securement to said center member when not in use.

Claim 30 (new) The garment assembly of claim 1 wherein said second means for removably securing said belt to said garment comprises a first strap attached to said garment and removably secured to a first front portion of said belt and a second strap

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attached to said garment and removably secured to a second front portion of said belt.

Claim 31 (new) A garment assembly, comprising:

a belt adapted to be attached approximately around a waist area of a wearer, said belt consisting of a first side member, a second side member and a center member, said center member having an elastic portion for automatic expansion or contraction of a diameter size for said belt based on movements of the wearer wearing said belt or a location of the wearer wearing said belt in a body of water, wherein when worn by the user said first side member is releasably secured to said second side member;

a garment adapted to be worn by a the wearer, excluding trousers;

means for removably securing said belt to said garment; and

a cover member removably secured to the center member prior to securement of said belt to said garment.